

- (vii) Gem & jewellery exporters have been allowed to export jewellery on consignment basis as per Rules.
- (viii) Gem & Jewellery exporters have been allowed to export cut and polished precious and semi-precious stones for treatment and reimport as per-Rules.
- (ix) Value addition norms for different categories of gems and jewellery products have been reduced.

Reduction in transaction costs for exports

*118 SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian exporters have to incur huge transaction costs to transport their products in foreign markets, compared to exporters from other countries;

(b) if so, whether Government have taken any steps to reduce the transaction costs and to simplify the procedures, in order to make our exporters more competitive;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (d) Indian exporters may have to incur higher transaction costs as compared to other developed countries.

Government has taken several steps to reduce the transaction costs and to simplify the procedures. It is a continuous and ongoing exercise. To make the Export Promotion schemes user friendly, major simplification Of procedures has been introduced. To that end, a single application form covering all Export Promotion Schemes has been introduced, thereby enabling filing of applications on EDI mode. This has significantly reduced filing of multiple documents. Online exchange of data with the Department of Customs, remittance of application fees

through EFT are some of the other steps which have already been taken to reduce transaction costs.

Trade relations with China, USA and Russia

†*119. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are taking any steps to boost trade relations between India-China, India-USA and India-Russia;

(b) if so, for which sectors of trade Government have chalked out a strategy; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A Statement is enclosed.

Statement

Trade relations with China, USA and Russia

- (b) India-China: A Joint Task Force has been appointed to study the feasibility of and the benefits that may be derived from an India-China Regional Trading Arrangement.

India-USA: A number of initiatives have been taken to promote and accelerate trade and investment. These include India-US Trade Policy Forum, a High Technology Cooperation Group (HTCG) to promote high technology cooperation in IT, Working Group on Information & Communications Technology (ICT), India-US Economic Dialogue, India-US CEO's Forum, India-US Economic and Financial Forum, India-US Energy Dialogue and India-US Knowledge Initiative on Agriculture.

India-Russia: Russia has been included as a Focus Country in the ongoing Focus CIS Programme aimed at enhancing India's

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.